

THE RANGER

8th/7th Battalion,
The Royal Victoria Regiment



Honorary Colonel:
Sir John Young AC, KCMG

Regimental Colonel:
Brigadier W.J. Hocking ED, RFD

Allied Regiments:
The Staffordshire Regiment
(The Prince Of Wales')

The Royal Regiment of Canada

Commanding Officer

Lieutenant Colonel
R.C Barnes RFD

Allied Associations:

The associations of the 7th Battalions
incorporating the
7th Battalion AIF
incorporating the
7th Battalion AIF
7th Battalion AIF (1939-45)
2/7th Aust Inf Battalion
7th Battalion, RAR

The 8th Battalion (Ballarat) Assoc

The 8th Battalion (Ararat) Assoc

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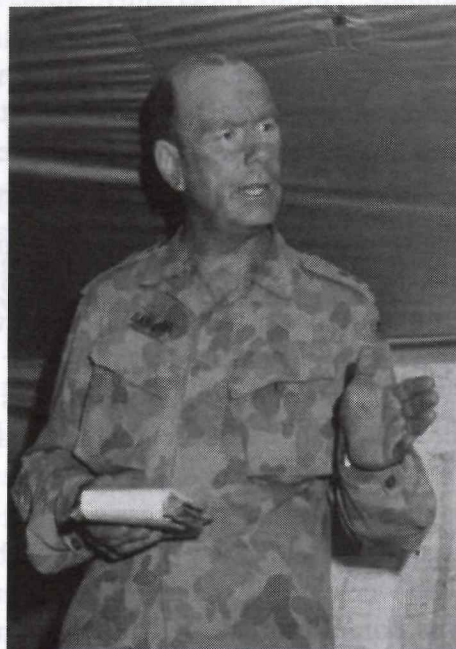
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FOREWORD

By

The Commanding Officer

Lieutenant Colonel R.C Barnes



The 8th/7th Battalion, The Royal Victoria Regiment has existed in one form or another for over 140 years and, not surprisingly, has changed enormously over its life. In 1998, we have surpassed ourselves! We have responded to the pressures of change on almost every front and achieved outstanding results through teamwork, dedication and by never losing sight of our reason for being - **INFANTRY, TRAINING FOR WAR.**

The 8th/7th Battalion has embraced Competency Based Training and made it the cornerstone of our drive towards the establishment of a demonstrable infantry capability. I am pleased to advise you that our battalion now leads the Infantry Corps (let alone the Army !) in this respect. The revitalisation trials within the 8th/7th Battalion, again self-driven, are now verifiably successful although much remains to be done particularly in the area of recruiting. We have achieved high levels of individual proficiency through a flexible approach to training, emphasis on field infantry skills and a commitment to doing the "hard yards" in periods of continuous training (block training). Inevitably, we have also begun to build good team skills at section level - the building block of any army.

We have shown the benefits of continuous training in our individual proficiency Exercises

Somme and Borneo and our tactical skills during Exercises Tobruk and Amiens.

We have led the Brigade in developing Battalion Group skills and have forged strong links with our supporting units. More importantly, we have all learnt how much we rely upon each other in the field and how critical good administration and support can be. The teamwork within the Battalion Group took a quantum leap forward from Exercise Tobruk in January to Exercise Amiens in April-May.

Individually and as a battalion, we have achieved great things in 1998 - the redeployment of the Battalion on foot overnight at Cultana over a distance of 27 Kilometres in marching order with all equipment and live mortar ammunition was truly a milestone for us all - I never doubted that the Battalion would arrive on time, in good order and ready to continue operations. Exercising our right to Freedom of Entry to the City of Ballarat in battle order on the weekend of our 140th Birthday in August was something we will all remember. Again, I felt proud to be a part of our fine Battalion the 8th/7th.

We also celebrated the 140th birthday with a Battalion Ball - the first in some years. I look forward to more in the future.

The 8th/7th Battalion has achieved a great deal over the last two years and we have done it together without fanfare - The way an infantry battalion should operate. None of it could have been achieved without the commitment of **YOU**, the soldiers, NCOs and Officers of the Battalion.

Remember, the 8th/7th Battalion, The Royal Regiment is about teamwork, commitment and achieving your goals - its about developing an infantry capability in our modern, integrated army.

Be hard, be fit, be focussed, and never lose sight of what you are - **INFANTRYMEN** ! - first, last and always.

It is with enormous pride that I have commanded this Battalion and rest assured, I will take a keen interest in all that you do in the future.

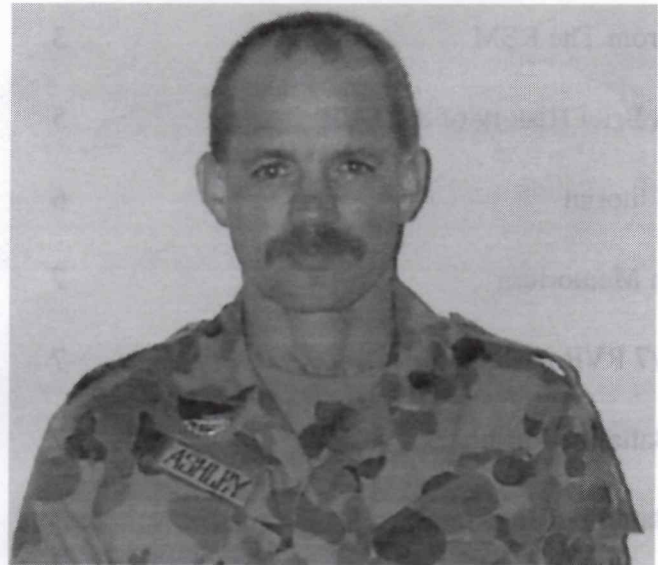
ROB BARNES RFD

LTCOL

CO

FROM THE RSM

READ THIS ARTICLE!



Let me start by thanking all ranks for helping me to settle in during my first 10 months as your RSM.

I will start by telling you my first impressions of the Battalion. They are positive. I am impressed with the commitment and motivation of most of the soldiers in the unit. To measure anything requires a yardstick. My yardstick is my previous Reserve unit. Rest assured, compared to that unit, we can hold our heads high. 8/7 RVR trains for war. Our training involves wearing cam cream, carrying weapons and exercising in the field where the Infantry belong. We are focused on improving our soldierly and unit skills.

However, we are kidding ourselves if we think we don't have some way to go. In recent times we have moved in leaps and bounds to consolidate and improve our collective skills, but in doing so we may have neglected some of our core basic skills. Make the most of your company training weekends to improve in this area. The foundations of good Infantry operations are solid individual skills in fieldcraft, weapon handling, battle fitness and junior leadership. I also believe that we can improve in the area of orders and the passage of information. If you don't believe you are getting sufficient information you must seek it out and regardless of your rank, pass it on to your mates.

Talking to soldiers around the Battalion I sometimes get the impression that some members are still confused as to what is required of you in

regards to your commitment to Block, or as it is now known, Flexible Training. Flexible Training provides better and more efficient training for less cost. This saving can then be used to increase the level and amount of training available to the Unit. Flexible Training, as the name implies, allows soldiers a choice in how they use their training days. A typical training year may consist of five periods of continuous training, eight weekends and Tuesday nights. A soldier would obviously gain the most benefit from attending all scheduled training but it is recognised that due to personal, schooling and employment reasons many of you may be unable to commit for all your parade card activities. As a minimum however, you are required to attend a nine day field exercise and an AIRN or Employment Proficiency exercise plus sufficient Company Training to keep you proficient. The AIRN exercises are the ones we conducted at Kapooka this year. Obviously, attending only the minimum training will mean that you will progress at a slower rate than your peers who are able to commit to all training and therefore gain competencies quicker.

Our most pressing shortfall is numbers. It is frustrating that despite good unit promotional activities and hard work, we seem to be making little headway in our battle to fully man the Battalion. I do however, have a proposition for you all. The Battalions best recruiters are our soldiers. You, more than anyone, know what it takes to be a good soldier. You know which of the members of your football team or which one of your school or work mates will make good soldiers. You must sell 8/7 RVR to them and convince them to join the Battalion. If every soldier in the unit was able to enlist one person, we would be at full strength! Rise to the challenge and start recruiting!

Finally let me remind you about the Infantryman. The Infantryman is **BATTLEFIT**. As a Part Time soldier you can expect at most one period of PT a week. This is not enough. It takes at least three hard periods every week just to maintain fitness and at least five periods to build fitness. You must develop your fitness regime in your own time. The Battalion now has our own PTI. CPL Hemm parades at Ballarat on Tuesday nights and he is always available to give you advice or to produce a training program for you. You are also most welcome to join your local Full Time staff in their daily PT. We can't pay you but you will be most welcome. The Infantryman has **HIGH STANDARDS AND SELF**

DISCIPLINE. You should never have to be told to get a haircut or to iron your uniforms. Even Private soldiers can lead by example. As a senior soldier, you act as a role model for the young and new members of your section. Remember that you are all ambassadors for 8/7 RVR in or out of uniform. Civilians will recognise you as a soldier and if they respect you they will want to be like you. This will make the recruiting task I mentioned earlier much easier. Enjoy a cold beer but don't abuse alcohol. Treat people with respect, remember that the Army has a no drugs policy and never be seen in public in a drunk or slovenly manner. The Infantryman always uses **INITIATIVE**. Soldiers have many good ideas. If you have one, let your chain of command know. I welcome any idea that will improve training or administration. If you see something that needs fixing and it is within your power to fix it - **FIX IT**.

I wish you and your families all the best for the festive season and I look forward to serving with and for you in 1999.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF 8/7 RVR

The 8th/7th Battalion, the Royal Victoria Regiment, encompasses the area bounded by Mildura, Warrnambool, Bacchus Marsh, Shepparton and Echuca. The Battalion Headquarters is at Ballarat, 113km west of Melbourne. The Battalion has depots in Ballarat (2), Bacchus Marsh, Shepparton, Echuca, Swan Hill, Mildura, Warrnambool and Maryborough.

The history of the Battalion commenced on the 23rd October 1857, when a meeting of citizens in Ballarat was convened to consider the possibility of establishing a Rifle Corps in the District. Representations were made to the Government of the Colony of Victoria, and assent for the enrolment of a Corps was received on the 21st July 1858. The first parade of this new unit was the 9th August 1858. This date is celebrated annually as the Battalion's birthday.

The Battalion has existed since that date with an uninterrupted history, although under a variety of titles. The present day 8th/7th Battalion traces its lineage back to a number of units. 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment), 59th Battalion (The Hume Regiment), 7th Battalion (The North West Murray

Borderers) and the 38th Battalion (The Northern Victorian Regiment).

The Battalion has been granted freedom of entry to the following cities in the area:

Maryborough	1980
Echuca	1989
Ballarat	1983
Hamilton	1990
Swan Hill	1988

The current operational role for the Battalion is in the defence of vital assets in Northern Australia, as part of the 4th Brigade from Victoria.

8/7 RVR BATTLE HONOURS

In early conflict Australia raised volunteer armies, building units in specific geographic locations across the country. The unit colours carry the following Battle Honours from these conflicts:

Boer War:

South Africa 1899-1902

World War 1:

Landing at Anzac
Somme 1916-1918
Bullecourt
Ypres 1917
Polygon Wood
Amiens
Albert 1918
Mont St Quentin, and
Hindenburg Line

World War 2:

Bardia 1941
Capture of Tobruk
El Alamein
Greece 1941
South West Pacific 1942-1945
Hari River, and
Borneo
Bobdubi
Finisterres

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 1998 edition of the Ranger. The Ranger is the culmination of effort from all members within the Battalion and is an excellent introduction into the training and achievements of the Battalion during the year.

The year has involved a number of major activities including the Battalion group deployment to Cultana, the AIRN exercises conducted at Pooncarie and Kapooka and the 140th Birthday celebrations for the Battalion along with exercising the Battalions Freedom of Entry to the city of Ballarat.

In total, the Battalion has stepped forward in developing the essential skills needed to establish the Battalion viability as a fighting unit. As can be seen by the content in this years "Ranger", the members had fun whilst achieving these goals.

Mark Sonter,
Captain,
Intelligence Officer.



In Memorium

VALE

48023455 Private Matthew Lawrence CLARKE
"C" Company 8/7 RVR
Tragically killed in a car accident 21 October 1998
Lest we Forget

8/7 RVR Awards for 1998

The following awards were presented to members of 8/7 RVR during the course of the year.

Order of Australia Medal

WO1 S.C Ward

Australian Active Service Medal 1945 - 1975

MAJ W.A Akell

SGT T. Anderson

Reserve Force Decoration

LTCOL R.C. Barnes

Reserve Force Medal

WO2 R. O'Brien

SGT L.T Miller

20 Year Clasp to Defence Force Service Medal

SGT S.J Osbaldstone

Marksmen

LCPL McKinley

PTE Alcorn

LCPL Craig

SGT Broemmer

SGT Dobson

PTE Farquhar

PTE Millar

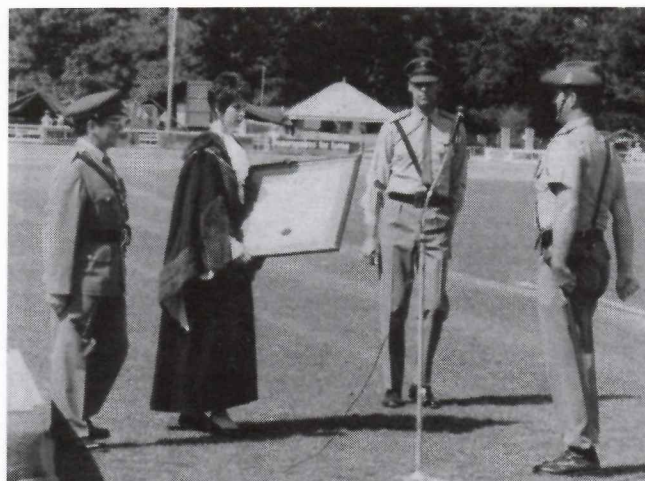
PTE Dooley

PTE Hopfner

Champion Section Commanders

Exercise Somme - CPL Parsons

Exercise Borneo - CPL Maitland



Battalion Flashback

On the 21 st of October 1989, the Battalion received The Freedom to Entry of The City of Echuca. The above photograph shows the Commanding Officer, LTCOL D.J. Ball RFD, accepting the Freedom from the Mayor of Echuca, Councilor Janina Gawler. The Honorary Colonel of the Royal Victoria Regiment, MAJGEN Kevin Cook AO, RFD, ED is seen at left, with The Battalion Second in Command, MAJ Neil Leckie at centre.

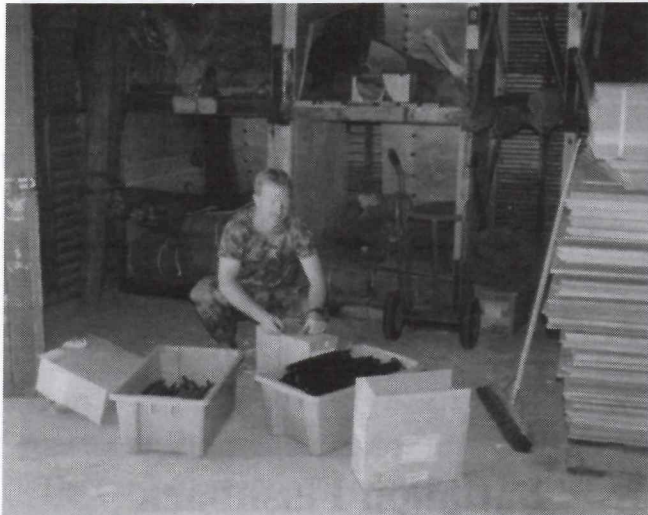
BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

Exercise Amiens

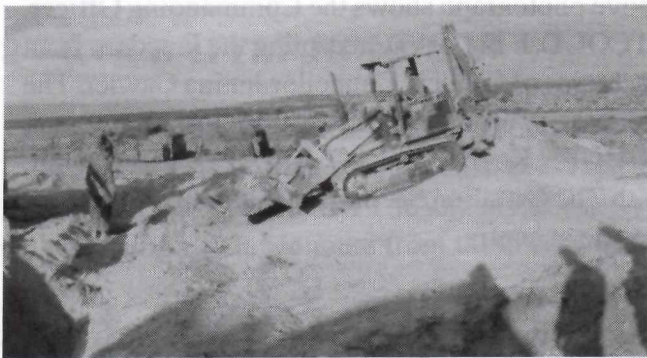
This exercise was conducted at Cultana earlier this year. The exercise involved a Battalion group deploying via road and air to the training area.



Sgt Dave Russell supervises the loading of a stores vehicle for the road move to the exercise.



*The QM, WO I Neil Wain completes the **final** check of stores prior to loading.*



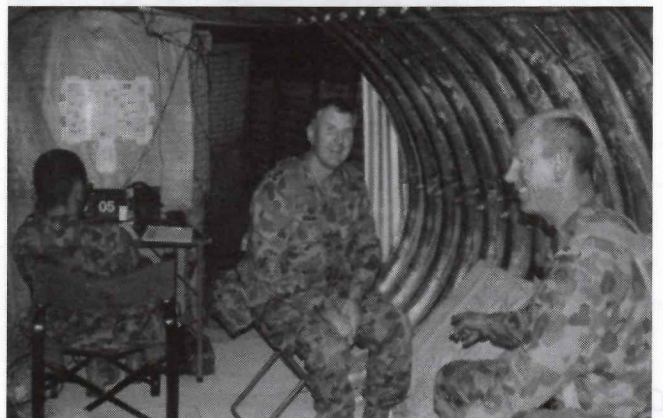
Combat Engineer support for the exercise was in heavy demand and provided by 4 CER. These photographs show the plant and operators constructing the underground Command Posts. During the exercise both the Ops, Pers/Log CPs and the RAP were underground.



The BC 38 Field Battery, MAJ Bob Charles enjoys a break during firing.



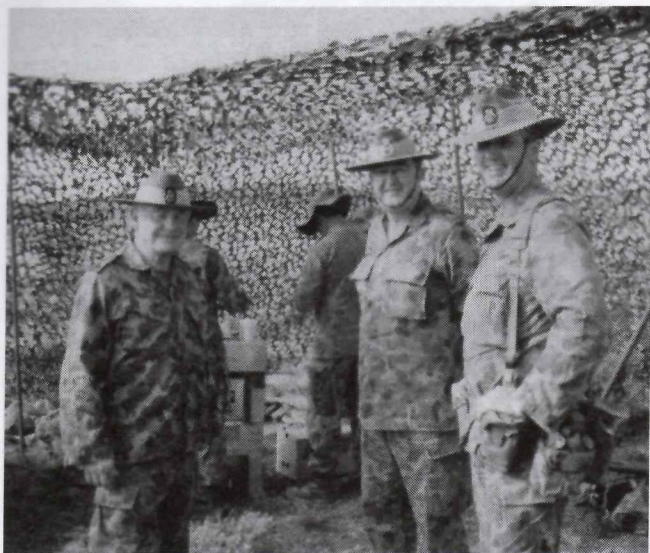
The 4/19 PWLH Liaison Officer, CAPT Tony Geyer smiles for the camera. 4/19 PWLH provided a troop of armoured carriers and were employed in a variety of APC and recon tasks.



The Commanding Officer, LTCOL Rob Barnes briefs the Commander 4th Brigade, BRIG Douglas Ball AM, RFD, on the operations of the exercise in the underground Ops CP.



The Commander of the 2nd Division, MAJGEN C. Hoeben AM, RFD, visited the exercise. Here he is seen touring the area with the Commanding Officer, and the Commander 4th Brigade.



The Regimental Colonel of The Royal Victoria Regiment, BRIG Bill Hocking ED, RFD, visited the Battalion Group and is seen here with the Commander 2 DIV and the Commander 4 BDE.



The Commanding Officer briefs the Commander 2 DIV and the Commander 4 BDE on the training competencies that will be achieved during the exercise.

THE BATTALION'S 140th BIRTHDAY

In true style, the Battalion celebrated it's 140th Birthday with a series of military activities during the week-end 8-9 August 1998.

The celebrations commenced on Saturday with the Battalion exercising it's Right to the Freedom of the City of Ballarat. The Unit received this honour on 26 November 1983, whilst it was titled The 2nd Battalion, The Royal Victoria Regiment. The day began with the mandatory parade rehearsals under the close scrutiny and supervision of the RSM. Dress for the activity was 'combat mode' consisting of DPCU, webbing, kevlar helmets and personnel weapons. Specialist carried their tools of trade eg. MGs, radios, chain saws and paving breakers. Individuals wore camouflage cream which added additional realism to the combat theme.



The Battalion formed up in the Ranger Barracks compound, and on the command of the CO marched to the Council car park where it was inspected by the Reviewing Officer, the Mayor of Ballarat, Councillor Judy Verlin. Host Officer for the parade was the Brigade Commander, Brigadier Douglas Ball AM, RFD, ADC. Invited guests included the Honorary Colonel of the RVR, Sir John Young AC, KCMG and the Federal Member for Ballarat, Mr Michael Ronaldson.



The march through the main street drew a lot of attention for spectators and week-end shoppers. Some failed to recognise the significance of the occasion and wondered why Ballarat's Chief of Police, Superintendent Lindsay Florence was standing in the middle of the road, signalling the troops to HALT. Many wondered if the order would be obeyed. After a successful and spectacular entry, the Battalion ended its march at the RSL Hall.

The Battalion Ball was held that evening at Ranger Barracks. Here, some 200 members and guests 'scrubbed up' and enjoyed an evening of festivities and entertainment. The opportunity was taken to present a number of awards, with the highlight being the presentation to the CO by the Brigade Commander of a well deserved Reserve Force Decoration (RFD). For once the CO did not know everything that goes on in this Battalion. It was a well kept secret that the award had arrived in the Unit. The Band from 5/6 RVR added to the entertainment receiving a standing ovation for their rendition of the ever popular 'Black Bear'.



On Sunday the Battalion held a Capability Display in the car park. This display allowed the general public to view the wide range of modern weapons and equipment utilised by our members. The display was supplemented by Brigade Units and included Engineer plant, an artillery gun, and the Recruiting Van.



The Battalion received many complimentary messages for it's achievements that week-end. The CO said that it was fitting that we acknowledge our association with The City of Ballarat in this manner and the Battalion's 140 years in defence of our nation . He went on to say, "It was a highly successful week-end and all involved are to be congratulated for their contributions".



The photograph below was taken during the Bn Birthday Ball. It shows the CO and SGT Hank Van Oorschot (the oldest soldier in the Bn), cutting the birthday cake.



RSM Handover

WO1 Stephen Ward handed over position of RSM of the Battalion earlier this year to WO1 Dave Ashley. WO1 Ward was posted to The School of Languages at Point Cook where he is learning Indonesian.



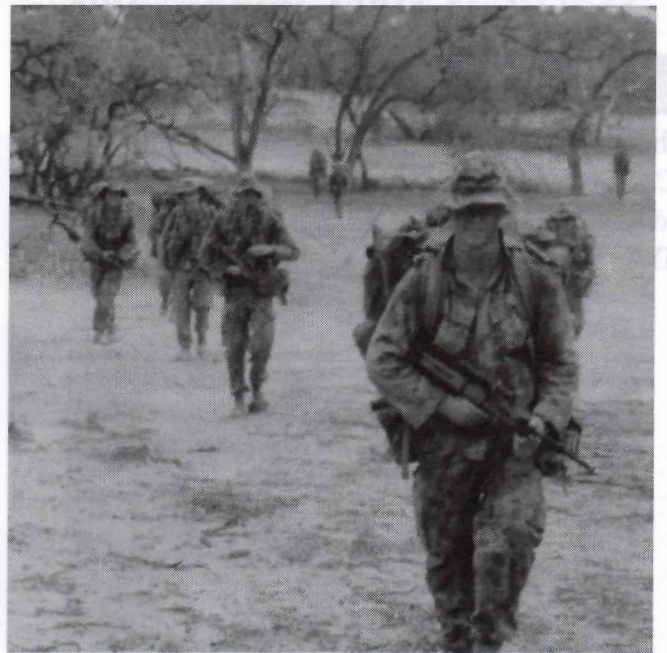
The official passing of the pace stick.

Exercise Tobruk

This was the annual AIRN exercise held at Pooncarie in February.



The RSM, WO1 Dave Ashley is pictured addressing the CO's Orders group during the exercise.



Lt Matt McFarland leads a patrol during Exercise Tobruk.

Award for regimental and training-position

By Diane Squires



Winning an Order of Australia Medal in the military division was a great honour, Wendourie recipient Warrant Officer Class One Stephen Charles Ward said yesterday.

Mr. Ward received the honour for

meritorious service to the Australian Army, particularly in regimental and training appointments. "I was very surprised when I heard about the award," Mr Ward said. „It's a great honour to receive something like that, but I was only doing my job." Mr Ward has been In the Army for 19 years and is with the Infantry Corps. For the past two years he has served with the 8th/7th Battalion. Royal Victoria Regiment as the Regiment Sergeant Major.

Additional honours were bestowed on the former RSM of 8/7 with his award of the Order of Australia Medal during the Queens Birthday celebrations, along with the newspaper extract.

Warrants and Commissions

During the course of the year a number of warrants and commissions were presented by the CO. These included the presentation of the Commission to Lt Jamie Hall of C Coy and Warrants to the RQMS, WO2 Chris Bates and A Coy Training Wo, WO2 "Rags" Clothier.



The presentation of the Warrant to WO2 Chris Bates



The Commission presentation by the CO to LT Jamie Hall



The presentation of the Warrant to WO2 "Rags" Clothier

Community Support

In September the battalion hosted a visit to Ranger Barracks by the Ballarat Police Youth club. This was the second visit by the club and proved just as successful as the one held last year, with the kids showing their enthusiasm (at times quite boisterously), for being a part of the unit for a short time.

The evening commenced with a unit brief by the Battalion 21C, followed by Lt Matt McFarland proving to the kids that army life was not all beer and skittles' by involving club members in a short push-up and sit up session. The club was then shown through a series of unit displays which included weapons, communications and field equipment and vehicles. Club members then visit the Ranger Museum and were briefed on the long history of the unit and its achievements in battle. The visit concluded with cordial and pancakes provide by our catering staff.



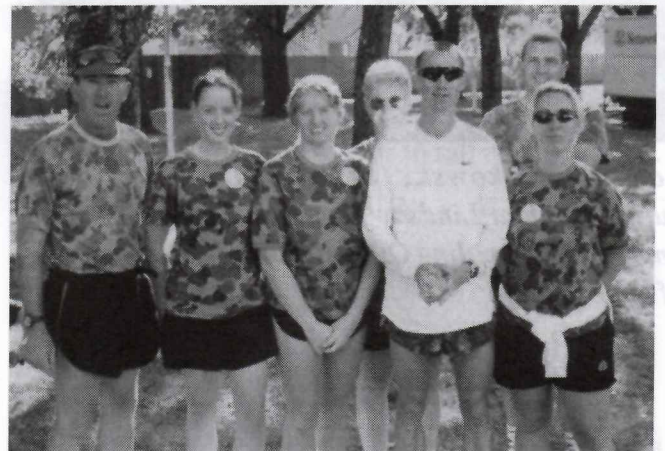
Police youth club coordinator, Senior Constable Ross Baker said that the visit to the depot was one of the highlights of the club's annual activities.' The kids really look forward to it and talk about their experiences for months later'. He thanked the battalion for their continued support to the local police youth club.

The Kids In Cancer Research Fund Raising activity

The Unit submitted a team in The Kids In Cancer Research Fund Raising activity, which was conducted on Saturday 4 April 1998. The activity involved sponsored participation from the Ballarat community, in a run/walk around Lake Wendouree. The proceed of the event would go towards the establishment of a Research Centre in the Ballarat Hospital. This Centre would research reasoning behind young children contracting cancer. Event patron was Ballarat's Olympian Steve Moneghetti.



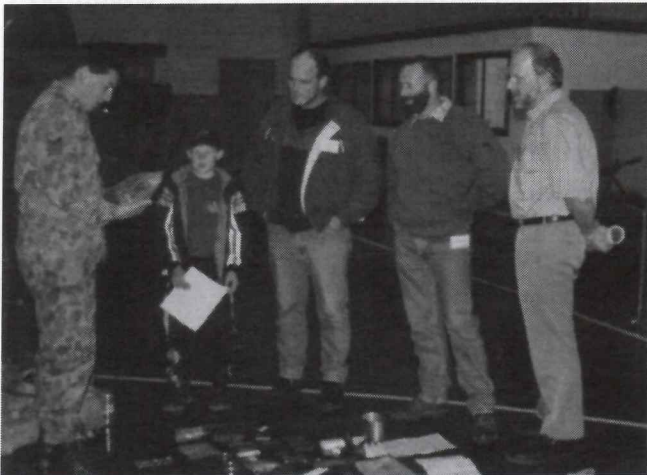
The photograph shows SSGT Mick Wakeling handing a cheque from the Unit Regimental Funds to Steve Moneghetti.



The Battalion team for the run consisted of SSGT Wakeling, PTE Walters, CPL Craig, CPL Millar, CPL Allengame and PTE Egan (pictured below from the left)

Defence Reserve Support Committee (DRSC) Activities

DRSC activities are regularly used by Reserve Units to publicise the benefits of Reserve Force members in the work force to employers. A DRSC Evening was held at Ranger Barracks on 9 Jun 98 to highlight these benefits to Ballarat Employers.



LCPL Richard Romeo of B Coy explaining the nutritious value of the One Man Ration Pack to a young Nick Brutn, Hank Brutn and Brett Noethers of Freighters, and Ron Hrymakowski of VICROADS.



Ron Hrymakowski of VICROADS, Chief Superintendent Lindsay Florence Ballarat Police and the Commanding Officer discussing the success of the evening.

The Officer's Mess in 1998 - Major W.A. Akell, PMC

Again the year saw a fairly full Social Calendar for the Mess which included two Regimental Dinners, four Pre-parade Dinners, a couple of Happy Hours and the ever popular mid-year Christmas in July Function.

The first Regimental Dinner was a mixed function, held in conjunction with The Sergeant's Mess in April and was highly successful. The opportunity was taken to farewell those members of the Mess posted since the previous Mess Dinner in November.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation to the CO of the long awaited Unit plaque from 5/6 RVR. This being his farewell gift for his time as BN 21C of 5/6 RVR. It was a case of "believe me, it's in the mail" finally coming to fruition.

The Pre-parade Dinners provided the Mess the opportunity to extend it's hospitality to a variety of local dignities and leaders of ex-service organisations. These functions have been a tradition in the Mess for a number of years and contribute greatly to the Battalion's high profile within the community.

The Past Commanding Officer's Dinner was conducted in November. This year again saw a number of our Commanding Officers return to their Mess. Guests included Major General Freer, COL COMDT of The Staffordshire Regiment, Sir John Young, Honorary Colonel, Brigadier Hocking, The Regimental Colonel and Brigadier Ball, COMD 4 Bde and past Commanding Officer, and our RSM, WO1 David Ashley.

During the course of the evening a number of Mess members were farewelled. These included, LTCOL Robert Barnes, MAJ Bill Akell (from the ARA), MAJ Andrew Wilkie, CAPT Paul Garrioch, LT Michael George and LT Matt McFarland. To those members and their families the Mess extends our best wishes and sincere thanks for the support and friendship enjoyed over the years.

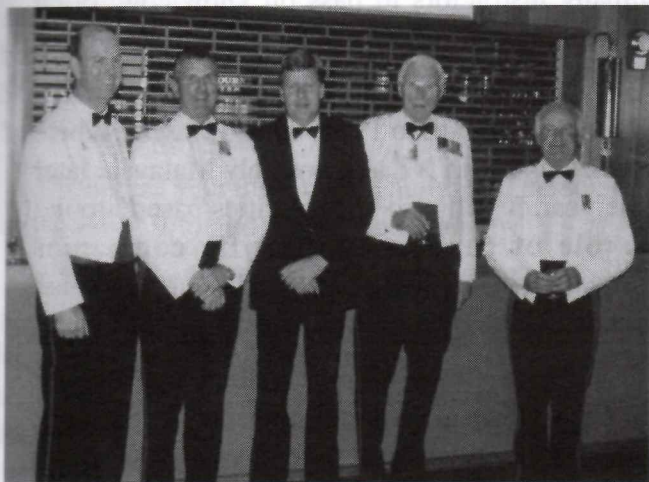
An All Ranks visit to the Mess on the final parade night of the year concluded a busy schedule of social activities.

My sincere best wishes to all for the coming festive season, I thank you for your support to the Mess and for the many good times we had around the fire place.

Combined Officers, Warrant Officers and Sergeants Dining In Night

This was held at Ranger Barracks earlier this year. This photograph shows from the left, The Commanding Officer of 8/7th Battalion, Lt Col

Barnes, The Commander of 4th Brigade Brigadier Bull, The Federal member for Ballarat, Mr Michael Ronaldson, The honorary colonel for the Regiment, Sir John Young and the Regimental Colonel, Brigadier Hocking.



SUPPORT COMPANY 1998

1998 saw the posting in of a number of regular staff to compliment the staff left from 1997. Now the Company had a full HQ staff and one roving lieutenant (a dangerous thing).

The first activity of the new year was the Officer/NCO weekend in Ballarat in January. This weekend allowed the old and new power groups to bond over a weekend of briefings and functions.

Following hard on the heels of this activity was Exercise Tobruk in the delightful veldt of western NSW. Unfortunately for the platoons, except Signal Platoon, performed their roles as infantryman rather than specialists. Highlights of this activity included:

1. Losing the RSO in unusual circumstances
2. Getting all the vehicles out of the echelon area before it became Port Phillip Bay
3. The PR activity at the local primary school

After the delights of northern Victoria and western NSW came a period of weekend and Tuesday night activities in preparation for Exercise Amiens in Cultana SA. This activity provided the opportunity for the platoon to practice their stuff and show the rifle companies what grown men do.

Pioneer Platoon in cohorts with the engineers provided support to BHQ with the construction of

more large holes than were dug on the Western Front during 1914 – 1918. In between this they qualified a number of their soldiers in basic demolitions and opened the way for the battalion advance with their tactical destruction of the wire fences and a number of vehicles.



Mortar Platoon proved once again that a pipe, aiming post and a pair of eyes will always be better than our brothers in fire support, the jabbers (gunners). The provision of intimate, accurate and timely fire support to the company live fire was instrumental in allowing the company commander freedom of movement and the tactical initiative. It also proved that infantryman does not need a weather report to allow rounds to fall on the ground.





Signal Platoon, those that were there, provided a class of radio communications that would have done NASA proud.

The highlight of this activity was definitely the advance over the night 30 April – 01 May. 27 km of lugging those damn mortar tubes and associated equipment allowed the Mortar Platoon Commander to once again see the delights of the Port of Whyalla at night and regret his decision to become an infantryman.

Since Cultana the battalion has exercised in Kapooka for a number of AIRN exercises. These activities allowed part time commanders to be in contact with their troops for a nine day period. Highlights included the shooting and the roping activities.



To complete the year is the annual courses camp at Puckapunyal in Nov – Dec. From this activity will flow a flood of recruits into Support Company for 1999. This will also allow many support company instructors to pass on knowledge often gained at the cutting edge of the ADF to the young soldiers.

Looking forward to 1999, this will see members of the company in NZ and possibly Malaysia later in the year. It will also see activities based around our role of supporting the rifle companies culminating in live fire attacks with everything that Support Company can throw around the battlefield.

Finally to those members leaving Support Company either to another company, another unit or civie street the best of luck in your endeavours in the future.

To those moving to Support Company in 1999 ensure you are fit and ready to work. If you cannot live up to both of these then stay in the Rifle Company as you will be a liability to your mates and the battalion.

ADMINISTRATION COMPANY

By Major Leckie

Administration Company had an extremely busy and constructive 1998. In addition to providing administrative support to every sub unit activity and the two battalion AIRN testing weeks, the company deployed a tactical "A" echelon during Exercises Tobruk and Amiens

These deployments were significant for two reasons. It was the first time for a number of years that we had practised our wartime role and it was the first time we deployed as part of a combat service support team capable of supporting the Battalion group.

Exercise Tobruk at Pooncarie was our baptism of fire as it were, and it is safe to say that everything that could have gone wrong, did go wrong. However at the end of the nine day period we had gained invaluable experience and had learnt many lessons.

Exercise Amiens enabled us to put many of these lessons into practice and the echelon as part of the CSST was able to provide credible support to the Battalion group. The next Battalion group

The Ranger

deployment should enable us to further tune the way we do business.

It has been an extremely busy year for the company, but due to the untiring efforts of company members, we believe we have supported the battalion well. Of special note for the company was SGT Broemmer and PTE G. Dooley gaining their Markmanship Badges.

During the year there were a number of personnel movements into and out of the company.

CHQ gained a Full-time CSM, WO Pellow and had Full-time Clerks CPL Carlin and CPL Tracey for part of the year. However, CPL Craig has been transferred to BHQ while PTE Egan was posted to 9 RQR.

The QM Platoon lost the QM, WO Wain , on posting to 42 RQR, Queensland. The RQMS, WO2 Bates, has taken over as QM and SSGT Fuller will be transferred in as RQMS. The Stores Section will see CPL Veitch posted to 4 Bde in Melbourne and be replaced by CPL Kincaid. CPL Harrison has been transferred to Spt Coy and PTE Hunter posted in to the unit with the responsibility of the Q Store. At the end of the year the Catering Section will lose

the Caterer, SGT Prentice, on retirement with SGT Broemmer assuming the role of Caterer. CPL Kaiser will be posted to 38 Mdm Bty.

The Transport Platoon gained a Transport Officer, CAPT Falloon, but will lose SGT Russell on re-posting with the Corps of Trucks. He will be replaced by SGT Casey. Also leaving the Tpt Pl are long serving drivers LCPL Scott and PTEs Bailey, Mathieson, Phillips and Rawlings from Ballarat, and PTEs Hayes, Mason and Peters from Geelong.

Tech Support Platoon has lost LCPL Cashin to the Full-time Army in NT, LCPL Wilson on posting to 38 Mdm Bty and CPL Werry on discharge.

The Medical Platoon lost the RMO, CAPT Hession, on discharge, CPL Jack on posting and will lose PTE Mayne to the Full-time Army in January. It has gained SSGT Clarke, CPL Anderson and more recently SGT Hem.

It would be remiss of the company not to make special mention of the part played by our former CSM, WO 2 Chris Ducardus. For much of 1996/1997 he literally was the headquarters of the company. For this he has our thanks and best wishes for the future.



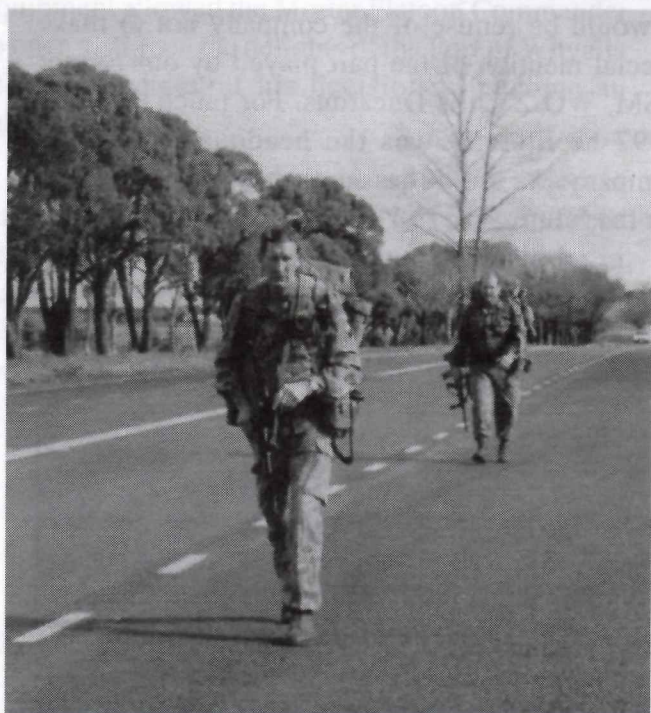
The CO tries his hand at operating a Unimog Jib Crane under the watchful eye of the Transport Supervisor, Sgt Dave Russel at Exercise Amiens.



Not everyone was lucky enough to fly to Cultana, the first ten vehicle packet at the refuelling stop at Nhill, Anzac Day 1998



Private Michael Dooley of Transport Platoon, in the hands of 4 BASB Mobile dental Unit at Cultana 1998.



Armourer Sgt Jacko Jackson and Transport Supervisor Dave Russell take in the sights of Ballarat's Avenue of Honour during the CFA conducted during the company training weekend held in August.

March To Victory

In an unusual occurrence, the company held an Admin Coy Training Weekend in August. It still managed to support two other Coy's while doing specialist training of its own, including a CFA. Ballarat's famous Arch of Victory was a welcome sight for members of Admin Company during their

training weekend in August. The Arch marked the finish point for their CFA march along the Avenue of Honour.



ALPHA (A) COMPANY

Exercise BREAK-IN

12-13 SEP 98

By 2Lt A.T Whitehead

Introduction

3 Platoon A Company (Warrnambool) conducted a platoon exercise, EX-BREAK-IN, on the weekend of 12-13 September 1998, at the old mental hospital, "BRILEY".

The aim of the exercise was to introduce our soldiers to MOUT, or Military Operations in Urban Terrain.

The weekend began with soldiers arriving at the depot on the Friday night for an early start the next day. Twenty-two soldiers were present for the weekend, and this included a section from A Coy's Geelong depot.

MOUT Training

Saturday began with a route march in marching order from the Warmambool depot to "BRILEY". Upon arrival, lessons were conducted covering the conduct of room entry, room clearance, building defence, section operations, and platoon operations in an urban environment.

The middle of the day was spent putting the morning's theory into practice and section commanders took charge of their sections and moved to different buildings to practice MOUT techniques.

Mission

In the afternoon of Saturday the exercise commenced in earnest, with the platoon being given its mission. The mission was to clear the enemy from a specific building as part of a company assault on the mental hospital.

Orders were given and at H-Hour the fire support section pounded the building with SRAAWS, M79s and MG fire in order to cover the lead section's assault on the lower floor of the building. It took the rest of the day to clear two floors of the three storey building.

Night Fighting

Having secured the two lower floors, Saturday night was spent in almost complete darkness, with the assaulting troops behind barricades and machine gun positions constructed from sandbags, wire and building debris. The enemy could be heard moving around on the floor above and they assaulted 3 PI on a number of occasions during the night.

The next morning the platoon pushed up and cleared the **final** floor of enemy.

Conclusion

Military Operations in the Urban Terrain is very challenging. The concentration required for fighting an enemy which is no more than a few feet away from you is intense. The use of grenades in a confined environment is fraught with danger and must be well practiced to avoid friendly casualties.

The exercise was an invaluable introduction to MOUT training for all members concerned, and a confirmatory exercise in 1999 is eagerly awaited.

Exercise HELLES

13-14 JUN 1998

By 2Lt A.T Whitehead

Introduction

Late on a dark and rainy Friday night, Army vehicles began arriving at a road junction just west of the town of Beech Forest in the heart of the Otway Ranges.

A Coy was assembling in the Otway Rain Forest.

Its mission: to destroy a Kamarian force hiding in the deep valleys of the Otway Rain Forest.

We distributed equipment weapons and rations before heading to our night loc, which had previously been secured by the Assault Pioneers. The next day the Company patrolled forward along the ridge line, seeking the enemy.

Many people who have trained in the jungle warfare centres in Queensland like to tell you that you have never operated in close country unless you've been to the Otways. Some of the ridges we operated on were physically impenetrable due to the forest regrowth. Other areas in the valleys were dark, wet and full of dense foliage and ferns, limiting visibility greatly, and making control a challenge.



The Operation

A Coy pushed forward along the ridge line encountering pockets of enemy resistance. Shortly before evening the Company turned north and descended into the Aire River Valley. A harbour was soon established for the night.



The next morning A Coy swept back west along the valley searching for a suspected enemy position. It was not long before the enemy was encountered and a vicious battle was fought, forcing the enemy back to their defensive position by means of aggressive **fire** and movement.

The lead platoon fought through the position and the battle was won.

The exercise was completed with a 16km route march along forestry roads back to the rendezvous and pick-up point.

By this stage the weather conditions and intensity of the fighting had begun to take its toll on the troops and some soldiers found the final route march a challenge.

The Enemy: Assault Pioneers

The presence of the Assault Pioneers acting as the Kamarian insurgents was a great asset to the exercise. The pioneers took the opportunity to set

up numerous booby traps for the unwary, especially around the main defensive position. For many of us it was our first exposure to booby traps, and it showed, as we took a large number of exercise casualties.

Exercise Helles was a valuable experience for all members, giving us the opportunity to operate in close-country over difficult terrain and in near freezing conditions, allowing us to live up to the Infantry motto.

Exercise SOMME

4-12 JUL 1998

By Capt C.P Durston

On 4 July 1998, a company sized group from 8th/7th Battalion Royal Victoria Regiment made its way north on the Hume Highway to the Home of the Soldier, Kapooka, for nine days of AIRN training. On arrival we were heralded with the news that temperatures had been down around zero and wet.

Fortunately for us accommodation was to be in 'C' Company lines, a relatively modern three-storey block designed to house a maximum of 150 recruits. Headquarter and support staff occupied the ground floor and two platoons under command of LT Hodgson and 2LT Hammer respectively occupied the upper floors.



Barracks life is not 'sheer luxury', but an essential part of a soldier's life, and it was here that the soldiers re-acquainted themselves with hygiene in shared facilities, **fire** drills, barracks discipline and the responsibility of setting an example to less experienced soldiers.

The Ranger

The high standard of accommodation meant that everyone could concentrate on the most important job at hand, rather than struggling to overcome fatigue and poor facilities. One of the short comings of living in barracks, especially in the cold weather was the temptation to keep the warmth in. As a result the lines were not aired out sufficiently and this may have contributed to the many flu symptoms experienced after the camp.

8/7 staff provided much needed support in the kitchen, the mess providing an interesting insight to recruit regimentation. The mess was also the source of much amusement/bemusement over officer's epaulettes which could not be seen under cold weather vests. (Since rectified I am assured.)

At all times the staff at Kapooka were very helpful, from the High-wire to the SATS Team (Small Arms Training Section) to the mess staff and the PTIs. We were really made to feel part of the 'show'.

Kapooka is an interesting place with many ghosts still about. The old SLR, range is just beside our accommodation block. One could imagine times not so long ago where training would have occurred to the sound of rifle-fire just a stone's throw from our windows. Silver-City, the conscripts barracks has gone, and the Classification and MTR ranges are now on the other side of the hill.



The High-wire confidence course was a great leveller and it was a thrill to have to deal with the many obstacles. Many of us can relate to the fact that it wasn't just the cold which makes your legs shake when standing on the tiny high-wire platform high above the belayers. The 'trick' is to realise that if the obstacle you were about to cross was just above the ground, you would cross it with ease. A case of mind over matter.

The Obstacle Course was a test of teamwork and endurance, and a task which had to be mastered for the Challenge, just as the Bayonet course was a test of skill and aggression. The Bayonet Course was also the place where the 21C got to tell the young female reporters about the rigours of Army life. (Hmmm ...)

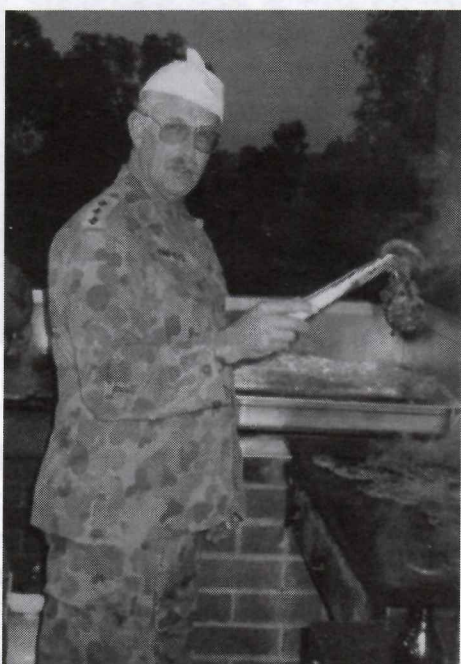


Shooting took place over a number of days and resulted in some very pleasing results, both for those achieving Live-Fire 15 and the marksmanship scorers. These very successful scores could not have been achieved without the professionalism of W02 Clothier and the Kapooka SATS.



AIRN compliance could not have been achieved without the assistance of people such as the Medical team at RAAF Wagga who put many of us through our medicals, despite their own workload. And thanks must go to W02 'Tiny' Fellow whose tireless efforts (despite being constantly harangued) kept the troops morale up in exchange for money. (He was in charge of goffers and chocky bars on behalf of Regimental Funds.)

Who could forget the fire drills and the life-saving efforts of the 21C when the toaster caught fire? Or the efforts of Captain Max 'Damien Parer' Humfrys, battalion photographer and proprietor of Greasy Joe's steak and beer joint?



The exercise concluded with the participation of all the soldiers in the Challenge, a team event designed to test all the skills of a rifle section. The stands included shooting (falling plate), the obstacle course, first aid, the bayonet course, navigation, stretcher carry, ammunition carry, and general knowledge, amongst others.



The winning team was the section from Support Company, and the 21C had the privilege of making this presentation to the team at the Sporties Club function at the end of a very successful exercise.



Below are some of the highlights and low-lights of the Camp:

Lessons learned:

Fitness is an individual responsibility which cannot be overcome by whingeing to or about the PT1s, who were, incidentally, very fair. Learn to trust your judgment and challenge your fears.

Highlights

Hospitality of Kapooka Staff, and the high standard of facilities. Maj "Yank" Akell's presentation of the Battle of Long Tan, and his part in it. High-wire course.

The Ranger

The fog as it rolled across the butts on the Class range Watching teamwork in action.

Lowlights:

Being left to our own devices during our visit to the respective Sgts/Offrs messes.

Special Awards:

“Storm-in-a-Teacup Award”:

To the Kapooka corporal who reported the Officers for wearing cold-weather vests in the mess, which covered their epaulettes. (Saved wear on the right arm)

“I Could Have Told You So Award”

To the 2IC, who took us through the **fire** drills, which eventually saved our lives when the toaster caught fire ...

“The Long Suffering W02 Award”

Which could have gone to any of our W0s, but which was awarded to ‘Tiny’ Pellow, for reasons best known to himself

“The Napoleon Award”

To the Battalion kitchen staff - who else would get up that early in the morning to make sure an army can march on its stomach?

“The I-Don’t-Mind-Doing-That-For-You Award”:

To the Q Staff who never complained (to our faces) when we came looking for our gatts when everyone else had already got theirs.

“The Damien Parer Award”:

To Captain Humphrys for his efforts with the camera.

And **finally**

The Coffee Club Award

To the TOCO, never without his coffee, his vest and a soft seat.



BRAVO (B) COMPANY

The Illustrious 8/7 Battalion of The Royal Victorian Regiment was put through its paces over many exercises over the last training year.

Fond memories of exercise Tobruk, being the first exercise attended by Bravo Company, are still embedded in the minds of the personnel whom attended. "Where the hell is Pooncarie?" was a phrase many of the young Diggers voiced before being whisked away for the enthralling exercise. Leaving the more experienced Diggers with half cocked smiles of previous exercises attended at Pooncarie. The weather was the first thing noted by all especially when the exercise got under way. It appeared that many personnel would be affected by the sweltering heat, more so when things started to get into full swing. Digging pits seemed a priority and all were in frantic action in doing so. Many bread and butter skills for use of a better phrase were incorporated in this exercise. Things such as defence positions, digging pits, patrolling, did I mention digging pits? and the list goes on. Platoon patrolling was a new skill picked up by many of the newer members of Bravo Company. All in all a hot, dirty, sweaty exercise with loads of good training. This was an exercise well worth attending by all members..

Exercise Amiens, was great for getting AIRN qualifications as indeed it was intended for. The standard of shooting was pleasing with all Bravo Company members passing their required AIRN shoots. Many skills were reiterated and relearned in the form of lessons and practical exercises. The military skills section of exercise Somme was commented by some as being too easy. Exercise Borneo members thank them for their contribution, with regards to their Military Skills days. All members of Bravo Company were able to qualify for this calendar years AIRN requirements.

Exercise Amiens provided us with loads of great experience and fun. The main thing that comes to mind is the live fire shoots. All members enjoyed and felt that they had gained valuable experiences and enhanced their own personal skill level by undertaking these types of activities, especially the live fire section attack. The rather long pack march roughly 30 plus km also springs to mind.

Borneo was the fourth exercise attended by Bravo Company for the calendar year. For those

that had already been acquainted with the joys of Kapooka through their Recruit course, it was a fond re-introduction to mess food, Kapooka's PTI's and sweltering heat.

The first item on the agenda was everyone's favourite activity, a BFA. Most passed with no complications whilst a few needed re-tests.

The standard of shooting was good, with most passing their required AIRN shoots.

The adventurous side in all of us was also catered for with an abseiling day at Kapooka's towers. Many had abseiled before, but for those who hadn't, it was a chance to prove their mettle and jump for the first time. For those who found their knees knocking with their first descent, it was a humbling experience for them when they made a trip to the local RAAF base at Wagga to leap off a 145ft water tower. Even after a few descents backwards, many still found it hard to muster the nerve to make the plunge forwards. One anonymous Corporal in particular found it necessary to lose part of his lunch near the bottom of his descent, much to the concern of the dodging break person. Very funny to watch. The corporal in question was later reported as saying "It wasn't wise to abseil, after consuming the left over milk ration at lunch, Was it?."

The finale of the exercise was a 2 day military skills exercise, involving a CFA, 12 km night navigation exercise, section attack, trailer push, stretcher carry, RATEL and first aid stand, mine incident drill, TOET's on the F88, F89, 66 as well as the M79 and the obstacle course. The whole Military Skills segment was approximately 35km in length. Most stands were completed to a high standard. This was reiterated with Bravo Company bring home the most Outstanding Section flag and award, presented at the well earned BBQ and light ale refreshments on the final day, before being transported home the next day.

CHARLIE (C) COMPANY

CHO C Coy

Charlie Company has completed a testing year and come through with flying colours by setting the standard for the rest of the battalion

The year started with several full time members marching into ensure that C Coy became an integrated unit.

The Ranger

Shortly after, we hosted the first Bn deployment in our own backyard at Pooncarie with C Coy providing the backbone of the Bn with a good attendance from all northern depots. Maybe the sunny weather deterred our southern cousins?

This strong showing continued with the C Coy Grp deployment to Cultana with attachments from 8/7 RVR and BASB to provide support to our exercise. This exercise was memorable for scenic walks and healthy exercise the soldiers undertook (should read route march and digging pits).

With the tactical phase behind us we celebrated the opening of the Swan Hill Depot with a Company dinner and parade with the CO & Bde Comd in attendance. The night was also an opportunity to farewell WO2 G. Morris, SGT S Cox and CPL H Jack.

Heading into the later part of the year and not wanting to rest on our laurels, we conducted DRSC-V employer night's at all four depots that set the standard for the Bn.

Promotions occurred as well, and congratulations to CPL Walker and LCPL's Carter, Dunbar, Bradly, McKinley and Shell. Further achievements went to LCPL McKinley and PTE Alcorn who both qualified in marksmanship shoots during the AIRN week at Kapooka.

On a sadder note the Coy was called upon to provide a guard of honour for one of our soldiers PTE Mathew Clarke who was tragically killed in a car accident 3 days after our return from Kapooka in October. Thank you to those who participated at such short notice. I am sure that PTE Clarke's family appreciated the effort made.

With a New Year fast approaching it is time to reflect on what we have achieved and have a cold ale as the Christmas season festivities begin. As we do so we will also farewell some of our members as they move to new postings, Namely Lt George to D Coy 6 RAR on promotion and SGT Erskine to Tro WO attached to the Pilbra Regiment. We wish them all the best in their new roles and congratulate them on their promotions.

In closing I would like to thank all those in the Company who worked tirelessly throughout the year to ensure that we overcame the problems associated in covering such a large spread on Northern Victoria. Well done and lets kick more arse next year!

7 Platoon

7 Platoon kicked off the year by participating in an exercise in Pooncarie as lead up training for Exercise AMIENS. The nine day Pooncarie exercise was made difficult due to the extreme temperatures, and a lot was learned by all involved about operating in difficult conditions.

Due to the heat most of the digging had to be done at night, and during the day working was very difficult as the water in our water bottles was nearly hot enough to make brews from. Despite these obstacles everyone pulled through and the pits were all completed and the exercise was a learning experience and therefore a great success.

The next memorable event on 7 Platoon's agenda was the "Bring a buddy" night. Basically all soldiers had to bring at least one friend with them to the parade that night. The aim of the evening was to inform all the guests about the Army Reserve and ultimately to get as many of them as possible to enlist. The turn-out was good and many people showed interest in the Army Reserve.

Exercise AMIENS, the mother of all exercises to be completed this year. The sixteen day exercise started off with us all crammed into the back of a Hercules for an hour and a half before we touched down in Whyalla. After a short wait we mounted up into the Unimogs before deploying to a position forward of the Battalion.

The first night was more exciting then we originally anticipated, after all, we never expected to get contacted on the first night of a training exercise. The enemy were more professional than past enemy parties and they initiated an attack before dark while we were waiting for the battalion to move forward. Afterwards we deployed by Unimog to our first night loc.

The next day we patrolled to the position that was to be our platoon loc for the next week or so. Digging commenced immediately, mostly by engineers in their back-hoes, but since we had to wait so long for all the other pits to be dug we just started digging ours anyway. Over the next week much digging was involved especially by 1 Section who only had one patrol and dug everyone else's pits for a week (onya fellas!).

At the end of the week was the event that everyone was looking forward to, a huge, and very

daunting walk. 7 Platoon picked up and left their position in the wee hours of the morning and with the highest imaginable morale they started marching. Some time and several blisters later 7 Platoon arrived at the live fire position, footsore and weary, but still ready for action.

The second phase of the exercise consisted of live firing from a defensive position, as well as section attacks, with support from mortars, artillery, and APC's. After being covered by a smoke screen thanks to mortars and artillery, the week ended with a short walk to a 5/6 RVR position where 7 Platoon stayed for a couple days before mounting up into the mogs and redeploying back to BHQ.

The next day was spent refurbishing all of the positions and doing other general post exercise admin, before finally, 7 Platoon were dropped off at the airport to spend another couple of hours crammed in the back of a Hercules and arriving home.

Several months later nine days were spent in sunny Kapooka, for AIRN testing purposes. Staying in barracks and eating from the mess was a novelty after Cultana, and having the means to have a shower every day was a treat. Some time was spent on such things as the high wire, bayonet assault, and the obstacle courses.

The rest of the week was mostly range shoots, where quite a few people qualified for their crossed rifles, and theory lessons and even a talk about the battle of Long Tan from Major Akell. A BFA and completing the mil skills led up to an enjoyable night spent out at the Sports club finished up the week in Kapooka.

The Battalion's 140th birthday in Ballarat was the most memorable weekend that most people have ever experienced in 7 Platoon. Rehearsals took up most of the Saturday morning before the highlight of the day, freedom of the City of Ballarat. The parade went smoothly and a good show was put on for the citizens of the city

After a march down the main street we were fallen out in front of the Ballarat RSL. From there we went back to BHQ and B Company to hand all the equipment in. After everything was cleared we were knocked off for the day, and most people opted to enjoy a few quite ales at B Coy's mess. A little later in the night members of 7 Platoon got themselves ready for the Battalion ball, and I must

say that 7 Platoon was the best dressed platoon in the Battalion

The ball was a success and nearly everyone headed down the street to continue enjoying themselves in the city of Ballarat. In the morning nearly everyone woke up back in the B Coy barracks, except for a select few who slept in hotels, next to the bus, or in a car on the way back from Melbourne. Needless to say half a dozen stories of the night were swapped between the younger members of the platoon, and in finishing I'd like to say Mr Reith, you're a dirty, dirty man.

As expected, 7 Platoon made an outstanding effort on the DRSC Employers night with more than thirty employers turning up to make it a hugely successful night. The soldiers of 7 Platoon out did themselves by putting on an excellent show for the employers. It was a very informative night and the feed back from the people attending was extremely supportive and all members exceeded themselves in their performances.

In conclusion I'd like to say 7 Platoon has had an excellent year so far and I'm sure we're all looking forward to finishing it off on a high note at the end of year Christmas party.

8 Platoon C Coy

The last twelve months has seen a lot of changes at Echuca with the platoon being redesignated as 8 Platoon under the restructure of Charlie Coy.

We took the fellows from the Shepparton Depot under our wing while they were homeless and needed to be straightened out. We are pleased to see that they are managing to get along on their own again now.

The platoon welcomes SGT Brian Tyler who joined us in January, moving from South Australia with his wife Donna and children.

SGT Tyler comes to us with a wealth of experience, having served with an Infantry Battalion in Sydney for eleven years, then as a Military Skills Instructor at the Army College of TAFE and most recently as an Army Recruiter in Adelaide.

Brian replaced SGT Neil Campbell who moved over to Shepparton but was only with us for a short time before moving to further his career with the Victoria Police.

The Ranger

We would like to welcome the following new members to the platoon, PTEs Lindsay Clark, Kris Eeles, Travis Hinson, Adem Sahinovic, Ken Gorrie, Shane Jefferis, Wayne Polglaise and Matt Lacey.

Congratulations go to Chris Dunbar on his promotion to LCPL, in between moving furniture and effects all over the country, and to Shaun Stringer who managed to get promoted to CPL whilst in the throes of setting up his own business, 'Stringer PI'.

CPL Simon Godfrey has also been busy, but on the home front, with a new addition to his family. He has also managed to get a toe hold on the bottom rung of his own fast food empire.

Ex Tobruk at Pooncarie will not be easily forgotten, with a number of cases of heat exhaustion in the blistering conditions. Clarky however surprised everyone by developing a mild case of Hypothermia! Too much Carlton Cold in the gun pit, perhaps?

Since our return from Pooncarie we have deployed to Cultana, a trip that had many highlights, the best of which was the 'live firing' phase of the exercise. Almost as exiting though was the approach march to our new Coy locs, some 26 km distant along 'gun barrel' straight tracks and through the coolness of the early morning air. Ahhhhhh, wouldn't be dead for quids!

PTE Jason White has been beavering away on his version of an ambush early warning device. This master electrician, at last count, was developing 'Mark III', and rumour has it that this one will come complete with a Tactical Nuclear Device.

PTE Tim Nathan is rumoured to be seeking a job as a glamour photographer, and his current portfolio of Exercise photo's grows apace. As most of the photos feature PTE Nathan, PTE Nathan and PTE Nathan, the whisper he may also be looking for a break into modelling. But if I may be so bold as to offer a word of advice Tim, stick to soldiering.....and get a new hairdresser!!!

8 Platoon is eagerly awaiting the renovations to the Echuca Depot which are due to commence any time.....!!!! These should provide a much needed facelift for the battle scarred depot.

The next twelve months promise many new and exciting opportunities to look forward to with trips to New Zealand and maybe even Malaysia on the

cards. In the meantime lets get those new recruits in!

9 Platoon

By Lt Hammer

The start of the year had seen one of our Corporals away at Kapooka as a recruit Instructor, and yes he has come back more regimental than ever. Though it was heard on the grapevine that he missed his girl sooo much that one Saturday he hired a car, drive five hours home, spent some time with her then drove five hours back!

For the first 6 months of the year the platoon had to share along with the OC, CHQ and Orderly Room an office little larger than a broom closet, often without lights, heaters or walls. The drill ground was full of rubble and builders tools. However, it was all worth it for now with the new renovations, the building is second to none. The platoon was a little excited when they saw the size of the new sheds.

"You could fit a LAV in there, or a new Bushranger vehicle"

However small dreams were never realised as the Q promptly began to outfit the sheds, including an excellent home gym

"We are just waiting for the swimming pool staff!"

Pte Thompson was awarded a prestigious Australian Defence Force Academy scholarship, which gives him the opportunity to attend three years at ADFA to finish his academic schooling and then a year at Duntroon to become a Full time officer. Pte Thompson described the scholarship as

"The key to a dream career"

He has the ambition to join the Australian Aviation Corp. (What, you want to fly over hill and dale instead of walking... ?)

Anzac Day saw most of the platoon attend the Mildura Parade with the rest of C Company and subsequent activities. However, Swan Hill still had a good showing for the dawn service and a cenotaph party for the main parade.

9 Platoon has sent soldiers on every exercise throughout the year, even if a certain Corporal was captured by the enemy party on the first day of a

particular exercise and then spent the rest of the exercise advising the enemy.

Community minded, 9 Platoon has maintained a showing at the Swan Hill Show with a recruiting stand and several members assisted the St Mary's/Mackillop Fair with security on the Saturday night with a night piquet that included hot brews, cold chicken, cake and sandwiches, but no enemy.

The end of the year may be approaching but the platoon is not by any means winding down with a company exercise in the Nyah forest coming up - that wonderful place along the Murray, where it has been known for a farmers telephone to disturb platoon orders groups.

Sadly, Pte Clarke of our platoon died in a car accident on Wednesday 21 October 1998. The platoon and many others from the company and higher elements from Ballarat attended the barracks to give him a service funeral to share in his family's loss and farewell 'Pieboy', a character of C Company and 9 Platoon who will never be forgotten.

10 Platoon

FROM THE GOULBURN MURRAY

By LT Hodgson

1998 has represented a busy year for 10 PL Shepparton. The unenviable task of raising a PL was given to LT Michael George and CPL Adrian Thompson. Starting with a complement of zero, the PL through the experience and enthusiasm of these two soldiers has been built to a posted strength of 1 & 16.

Instrumental in the rebuilding of the Shepparton PL has been the dedication and commitment of a small core of very able soldiers. The section commanders, L/CPL Bradley and McKinley have spent many hours in ensuring that each of their soldiers were able to parade and participate in training. CPL Thompson as acting PL SGT has ably lead us all through some grueling PT sessions and we toed the line with our weapons handling.

The year saw us contribute a compliment of soldiers to EX Pooncarie, Cultana and Somme. In each case the experience developed further our emerging identity as a PL. In cohort with our recruitment drive, the PL was involved in a number of high profile events such as abseiling off the carpark and a beep test in the centre of Shepparton.

The monthly radio show with One FM received much attention and briefly exposed the Shepparton community to the 'military version' of John Laws. In August we conducted a very successful Employer's Night under the auspices of LT George. In front of the CO and the RSM approximately forty people enjoyed the night, with LT George and CPL Thompson enjoying the ongoing supply of beverages for the rest of the year. This event was capped off by a recruitment day held in September, which further ensured that these two would never be without a drink!

The quality of our PL's soldiering skills continues to grow. We have developed our defensive ops as a result of our experience in Amiens. Also, our marksmanship continues to improve with the PL having two members who successfully completed LF18 on EX Somme. By the end of August, I was able to submit a full compliment of AIRN qualifications for the PL to CHQ.

Our numbers continue to grow. PTE's Dunne, Piggot and Tyndall joined us straight from Kapooka and are presently on their IET course in Singleton. Their keenness and participation in mess activities have brought much amusement to the PL.

The maintenance of good communication is vital to a PL. The dispersion of our members has not always made that task easy. However, as we continue to build our numbers and improve our training, 10 PL can build on a very solid 1998.

8/7 RVR 1999 Training Program
Correct as at 8 November 1998

SER	PD	DATE																														
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)	(l)	(m)	(n)	(o)	(p)	(q)	(r)	(s)	(t)	(u)	(v)	(w)	(x)	(y)	(z)	(aa)	(bb)	(cc)	(dd)	(ee)	(ff)	(gg)
1	Jan	FT BRL (16-17 Pre-deployment training for Ex Tasman Reserve contingent)																														
2	Feb	Ex Tasman Reserve (BRat/Puckapunyal/Longlea/NZ)																														
3	Mar	Pde				Labour D Weekend (B)				Pde			{A, C Spf}				Pde					{A, B}		Pde								
4	Apr		Easter																													
5	May	FT Short Leave																														
6	Jun	Pde *Sh																														
7	Jul																															
8	Aug																															
9	Sep																															
10	Oct																															
11	Nov																															
12	Dec	Ex Bobdubi II (Puckapunyal) (Bn gp tactical field exercise)																														

{-} refers to non-directed training.
 EP refers to employment proficiency training including AURN requirements.
 * refers to DRSC evening in that depot.